

George Washington to Benedict Arnold, October 23, 1778, The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799. John C. Fitzpatrick, Editor.

To MAJOR GENERAL BENEDICT ARNOLD

Head Quarters, Fredericksburgh, October 23[–27], 1778.

Dear Sir: I was favoured with your letter of the 11th. Instant.¹ I am sorry at the destruction of property at Egg harbour; but in attending to the general objects of war, we must at times submit to such losses, or depend on the exertions of the militia for their prevention.

No doubt you have been informed of the progress of the enemy's embarkation at New-York. The 19 and 20th. Instt. about 150 sail of vessels, including transports and ships of war, put to sea with a considerable part of the garrison. They stood Eastward. Their destination still continues a matter of inquiry; and whether they are to be followed by the garrison. However this latter must be ascertained in a very little time. I am, etc.

[October] 27.

By some accident this letter has been delayed since the 23 which gives me an opportunity to correct an error which was induced by the fleets sailing at the moment our intelligence had announced for the departure of the embarkation. However we have the most authentic advices that the troops which had embarked are still in the harbour. A little time must throw some light on their intentions and serve to unravel their designs.²

¹Arnold's letter of October 11 is in the Washington Papers. He reported that the British landed 500 men from a small squadron and burnt all the houses and 8 or 10 vessels at Little Egg Harbor, N.J.; they then moved toward

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Great Egg Harbor. Pulaski's corps and Procter's artillery, with a few militia, were watching them. Later the British surprised Pulaski's corps and inflicted some damage.

The draft is in the writing of James McHenry.